

MICHAEL SHIPPEY, PH.D

agent no. 45,588 1-714-693-9110

Section 2. Reply to the Office in re 35 USC § 103 rejections

Applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration of the obviousness rejections of the claims in the instant application, based on the amendments to the claims and the arguments offered below. The Examiner has rejected all claims based on 35 USC § 103 obviousness in light of prior art U.S. patent number 6,197,390 to inventor LaVite (hereafter referred to as LaVite '390) in view of US. Patent 5,340,350 to inventors Fink et. al. (hereafter referred to as Fink '350).

Applicant agrees with the Examiner that LaVite '390 is clearly the closest prior art here. That patent teaches the attachment of a solid object to various locations in and on a motor vehicle, including a trailer hitch. The difference between the current invention and LaVite '390 is not so much the design of the object, but rather the design of the current invention that enables it to be placed in various postures and positions, and hold its shape during motion of the vehicle. The invention of LaVite '390 is a solid object that does not change position or shape after manufacture.

Certainly Fink '350 is within the same class of invention, and is worthy of examination as prior art to be used in combination with LaVite '390 to form a combination threatening patentability of a new invention. Fink '350 does indeed contemplate an internal skeleton of some sort to aid the human or half-human mannequin to hold its shape. But Fink '350 surely does not teach the novel method which is disclosed in the current invention, and therefore is not negating patentability of the current invention. Indeed, as will be shown, Fink '350 in many respects teaches away from the current invention.

Fink '350 teaches an inflatable dummy or mannequin, with optional skeletal aids. The skeletal aids are disclosed and claimed as "elongated inserts", wherein said inserts may be constituted of flexible wire, plastic dowels, wood dowels, or the like. The details of thickness, composition, etc of the wire or dowels is not further detailed in Fink '350.

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Now this may work fine for the invention of Fink '350. But the plastic or wood dowels will not serve in the present invention, as they are not flexible (wood and stiff plastic) yet firm enough to retain position (soft plastic). Furthermore, not any wire will serve in the present invention, due to the forces placed on an ornament bound to the trailer hitch of a vehicle in motion. Indeed, Applicant carried out an informal test program to establish the best type of wire and plastic outer composition that could withstand the rigors of the intended use of the current invention. Nowhere in Fink '350 are any of these requirements disclosed.

For that matter, the inflatable body that is the core of the invention in Fink '350 would not last long in the environment of a trailer hitch of a vehicle in motion.

The basic reason why Fink '350 teaches away from the current invention as indicated is that the invention in Fink '350 is designed to be housed permanently inside the passenger cabin of a car. This is a much more hospitable, and less demanding environment, than the outside of a motor vehicle. It is far easier to design a motionless, solid object for attachment to a trailer hitch than to invent an attachment that has changeable shape, yet capable of preserving its shape despite the forces of wind and automobile motion that it faces in its day-to-day environment.

For these reasons, Applicant suggests that neither Fink '350 itself, nor its combination with LaVite '390, would reveal the details necessary to a person of ordinary skill in automobile decorative art to design the invention of the current application. Thus, Applicant prays for reconsideration of this rejection.

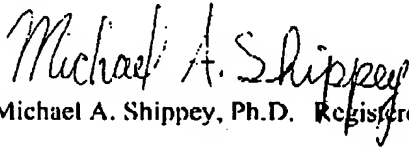
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Section 3. Remarks

Applicant has responded to all points raised in the office action of 03/09/2005, and believes the application is now in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests a timely Allowance in this case.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michael A. Shippey, Ph.D. Registered Agent # 45,588

4848 Lakeview Avenue, Suite B
Yorba Linda, California 92886
Telephone (714) 693-9110